



STORAGE NEWS

GO FOR A GMAIL DRIVE

For those with a Gmail account, the Gmail Drive is an essential download. This unofficial shell extension for Windows maps the storage space in your Gmail account as a local hard disk. You can copy files of up to 10MB to and from your Gmail account just as you would with any other hard disk. It's a simple and effective way of transferring files between locations without having to master FTP or send emails to yourself. Download the extension now from www.viksoe.dk/code/gmail.htm.

LACIE AND HITACHI ARE BIGGEST

LaCie has teamed up with Hitachi to create three new external storage devices. All three use Hitachi's 7K500 500GB hard disks. The Biggest F800 uses four hot-swappable 7K500 drives in either RAID 0, 0+1 or 5 configurations for data security. It connects through FireWire 800 or USB2.0 and costs £2,149. The Bigger Disk Extreme has the same 2TB capacity as the Biggest F800, but comes in an enclosed unit. It uses RAID 0 and connects via FireWire 400/800 for fast file delivery and costs £1,519.

Finally, the Ethernet Disk mini uses a single 7K500 drive and has both USB2.0 and network ports and costs £415. All three are available now.



REVIEW INTERNAL DVD WRITER

NEC ND-3540A

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £38 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.microdirect.co.uk

DETAILS www.nec.co.uk



20 minutes 35 seconds to fill a disc. It also takes just under six minutes to fill both types of single-layer DVD.

There are many drives available for around the same price as the ND-3540A, but few can lay claim to such impressive writing performance. If you want a fast, no-frills, high-compatibility drive, look no further.

David McKinnon

✓ Fast, reliable writer; writes to both DVD+ and DVD- two-layer formats

✗ Doesn't support DVD-RAM

SPECIFICATIONS Internal DVD+/-RW +/-DL drive, 16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+R DL, 6X DVD-R DL, 48X CD-R, 32X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM. Part code ND-3540A

REVIEW EXTERNAL HARD DISK

CMS ABS Plus

RATING ★★

PRICE £278 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.mycomputerbits.com

DETAILS www.cmsproducts.com



The ABS Plus combines automated backup and disaster recovery with voluminous external storage thanks to the 400GB hard disk housed in its plastic case. It connects using USB Hi-Speed and draws power from an external power supply. In our hard disk speed test it transferred small files at 6.3MB/s and large files at 22MB/s, which is comparable to other similar-capacity external drives.

The inclusion of CMS BounceBack Professional distinguishes the ABS Plus from

everyday USB hard disks. This easy-to-use application installs from the drive and provides customisable full or incremental bootable backup at user-defined intervals. This means that you can always have an attached copy of your main hard disk to boot from if you experience data loss or corruption of your main drive. The downside is that it's not cheap. The software alone costs £45, and you can buy similar hard disks for about £220, which leaves us wondering what the remaining £13 is for.

David McKinnon

✓ Bootable external backup via USB

✗ A little expensive

SPECIFICATIONS 400GB external hard disk, USB Hi-Speed interface, external power supply. Part code U-CMSUBASE2400UK

HOTLIST DVD WRITER

LG GSA-4163B

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £37 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.microdirect.co.uk

DETAILS www.lge.com



Winner of our July 2005 DVD writer group test, LG's GSA-4163B has since dropped in price by an incredible £12. It's still available with its impressive software bundle and is one of the few drives to offer DVD-RAM compatibility. Compatibility isn't its only asset, though: it was also one of the fastest drives in our recent test, burning a full DVD+R in five minutes 36 seconds.



SPECIFICATIONS 16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 3X DVD-RAM, 40X CD-R, 24X CD-RW. Part code GSA-4163B

HOTLIST PORTABLE HARD DISK

WESTERN DIGITAL Passport 80GB

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £103 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.stuff-uk.net

DETAILS www.wdc.com



Western Digital's rubber-bottomed Passport is an excellent portable disk. It's a little bigger than a PDA and weighs just 238g, so it's easy to carry around. Inside is a 2½" hard disk that provides 80GB of storage. It connects via USB Hi-Speed and provides the kind of transfer speeds usual for such a disk: large files transfer at around 22MB/s and small files at 7MB/s. It's ideal as a second notebook hard disk or as portable file storage.



SPECIFICATIONS 80GB capacity, USB Hi-Speed interface, USB powered. Part code WDXML800UETE

HOTLIST INTERNAL HARD DISK

SAMSUNG SpinPoint SP2504C

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £86 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.komplett.co.uk

DETAILS www.samsung.com



Samsung's SpinPoint SP2504C was easily the best hard disk in our recent Labs test (Shopper September 2005). It combines good value with cutting-edge technology. Its 250GB of storage is accessed through a SATA II interface with Native Command Queuing at a maximum transfer rate of 300MB/s. If you're looking for more internal storage and you have a free SATA connector, this is the best drive to buy.



SPECIFICATIONS 3½" internal hard disk, 250GB capacity, 232GB formatted capacity (NTFS), SATA 300 interface, 7200rpm spindle speed, 8MB cache. Part code SP2504C